

2006 Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month Planner

Motorist awareness is a fact of life

As a motorist or a passenger, there are some steps to become more aware of motorcyclists

Motorist awareness is an important component of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's comprehensive motorcycle safety program. More than 50 percent of fatal motorcycle crashes involve a motorcycle and another vehicle. In many cases, the motorist either does not see the motorcycle at all or does not see the motorcycle in time to avoid a crash. It is important for motorists to know their actions affect the safety of motorcyclists. A motorist and a motorcyclist may take different actions for the same driving situation or highway situation. For example, a motorist may ignore a piece of road debris; however, that same piece of road debris may be deadly for a motorcyclist.

Respect the motorcyclist:

Remember a motorcycle is a vehicle with all the same privileges of any other vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.

Look out:

Look for the motorcyclist on the roadway when entering or leaving a lane of travel, and especially at intersections. Because motorcycles are smaller, drivers tend to underestimate how far away a motorcycle actually is and how fast it's going. Also, drivers can be fooled by a motorcycle's flashing turn signal. Some motorcycle turn signals don't turn off by themselves like those on automobiles and riders can forget about them, riding for long periods of time without realizing the blinker is on. Drivers should take an extra moment to determine a rider's intentions by making eye contact with the rider before proceeding.

Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver:

Obstructions (debris, potholes, etc.) that you may ignore or not notice can be deadly for a motorcyclist. Predict evasive actions.

Allow plenty of space:

Don't follow a motorcycle too closely. Allow enough room for the motorcyclist to take evasive actions.

Contact your State motorcycle safety administrator or Governors' Highway Safety Representative (listed in the NHTSA Regional Offices link in the left-hand column) to find out about Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month activities near you.